

The background features a blue sky with stylized white and blue clouds in the upper left and a large yellow sun in the upper right. A blue pen with a silver clip is positioned diagonally across the middle. Below the pen is a dark blue banner with rounded ends, containing the text "Literary Term: Allusion" in white. A lighter blue banner is visible below the dark one.

Literary Term: Allusion



Definition

- An allusion is a reference to an artifact, which could be a person, place, thing, event, or quote.
- It must be well-known and identified by a large group of people.
- Readers who are unfamiliar with the allusion used in the text will not understand the intended meaning of the author or speaker.



Allusion Definition....cont'd

- It is often a proper noun.
- This reference is probably explicit, but its meaning can be understood only if the person, place, or event is well known by all or known by the reader.
- An allusion can help the reader develop their understanding of the theme of the book, or bring up a new theme based on that small reference.



Purpose

- We, as readers, need to know what allusions are so we can identify them in our reading.
- We need to be able to recognize allusions in the books we read because they are usually important in our overall understanding of the book.



Purpose.....cont'

- For example, if the name of a character was an allusion to a different character in another literary work, that similarity could reveal something about the character that we wouldn't have known if we hadn't found the allusion.



Allusions also:

- • increase the audience's bond with the author, as the author and the audience become/are part of a select group who understand the allusion.



Allusions Commonly Made to:

- ◊ the Bible
- ◊ nursery rhymes
- ◊ Myths
- ◊ famous fictional or historical characters
- ◊ literature

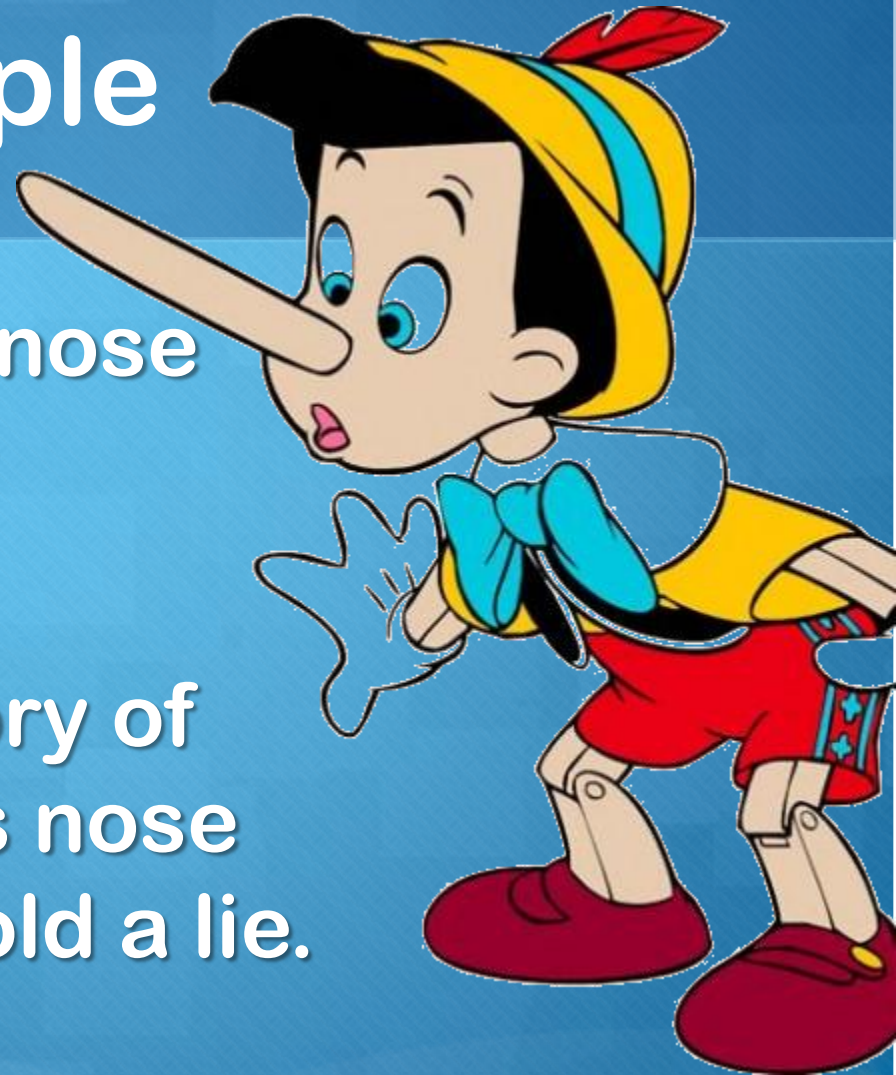


Allusions Have the Following Effects:

- They stir up feelings in the reader by just taking up a minimal amount of space.
- In other words, they do the work so the author doesn't have to.
- They train the audience--the audience must figure out and understand the original source.

Allusion Example

- “I was surprised his nose was not growing like Pinocchio’s.”
- This refers to the story of Pinocchio, where his nose grew whenever he told a lie.





Taylor Swift “Love Song” Allusion

- “That you were Romeo, you were throwing pebbles
And my daddy said stay away from Juliet
And I was crying on the staircase
Begging you please don't go.”

Explanation

- Romeo was a character in Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, and was very romantic in expressing his love for Juliet.





Allusion Example

o 'Christy didn't like to spend money. She was no Scrooge, but she seldom purchased anything except the bare necessities'.

Explanation

- This is a popular allusion to Scrooge, the famous penny-pinching character of Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*.





Find the Allusion

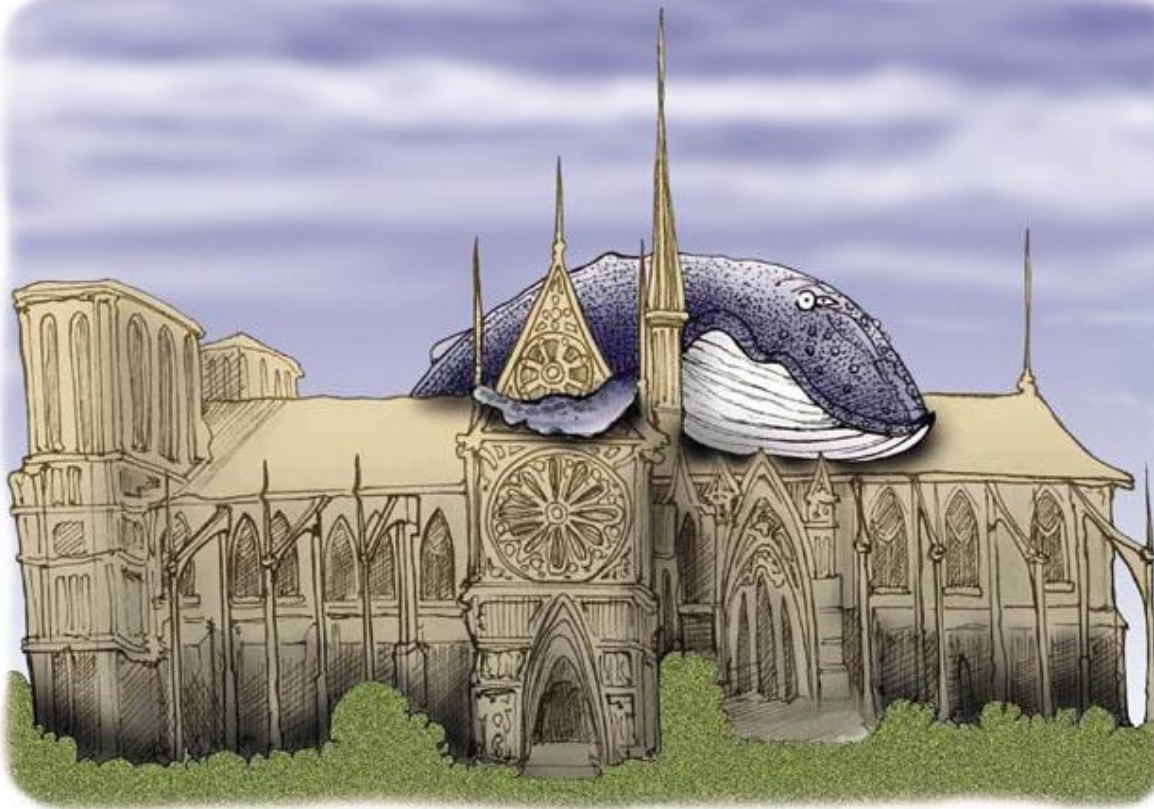
- “The day was young and I was looking forward to the afternoon. I was supposed to go out on a date, but my plans were changed. All my siblings were gone, but I had been in the house slaving like Cinderella, scrubbing the floors on my hands and knees, washing clothes and dishes and making everyone's beds.”

Explanation

- The mention of “slaving like Cinderella” is a reference to a popular Disney story, self titled Cinderella, in which a young girl was forced to cook, clean and care for her (evil) step-mother and step-sisters.



Allusions in Illustrations:



The Humpback of Notre Dame

- For a viewer to fully appreciate this illustration, what background knowledge is needed?
- NOTE: If the reader/viewer requires background knowledge to understand it, then the reference is known as an allusion.

Allusion in Illustrations, cont'd

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"He heard a voice saying:
'If you build it they will come.' "

- For a viewer to fully appreciate this illustration, what background knowledge is needed?
- Answer: Knowledge of "Field of Dreams" popular quote "If you build it, they will come"; recognition of what's being depicted in photo (a Porto-Potty)



Allusion found in “A Retrieved Reformation”

Example:

- O. Henry writes, "Mr. Ralph Spencer, the phoenix that arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes ..."

Meaning

- The allusion here is to the phoenix, a mythical bird of the Arabian wilderness. It was believed to die flames every 500 or 600 years. Then, the phoenix would be reborn, rising from its ashes.

Purpose:

The allusion helps readers understand that Jimmy Valentine has completely reinvented himself as Ralph Spencer.



REVIEW:

- An allusion is a reference to a person, place, thing, or an event that requires readers/viewers to have prior knowledge in order to recognize or to understand.
- The reference must be well-known to a large group (majority) of people in order to be considered an “allusion”



Allusion or not?

- Warren Buffet said, ““I violated the Noah rule: predicting rain doesn't count; building arks does.”
- “I felt so ill, I just curled up on the sofa and “Saiged” all afternoon.”
- “I made every shot; it was an Anthony moment all over again.”
- “Senator Obama's call to 'ask not just what our government can do for us, but what we can do for ourselves' had an even more direct connection to the inaugural address of the first G.I. Generation president of the United States.”
- “I painted with words, Harry-Noden-style”

Allusion or not?

- Warren Buffet said, ““I violated the Noah rule: predicting rain doesn't count; building arks does.” **YES– Noah's ark is typically considered well-known**
- “I felt so ill, I just curled up on the sofa and “Saiged” all afternoon.” **NO- most people don't know that my cat's name is Saige & she sleeps on the couch all day.**
- “I made every shot; it was an Anthony moment all over again.” **NO, most people don't know about my neighbor (Anthony) who made a lucky shot last summer that wowed the neighborhood.**
- “Senator Obama's call to 'ask not just what our government can do for us, but what we can do for ourselves' had an even more direct connection to the inaugural address of the first G.I. Generation president of the United States.” **YES, most people recognize the quote from JFK famous speech**
- “I painted with words, Harry-Noden-style” **NO, the majority of people may not be familiar with my old college professor (Harry Noden)'s book titled, Image Grammar in which he teaches the notion to “paint with words”.**



Questions?